

**To:** ecowan@azdailysun.com[ecowan@azdailysun.com]  
**From:** Mylott, Richard  
**Sent:** Tue 8/11/2015 2:42:37 AM  
**Subject:** RE: Gold King Mine wastewater and Lake Powell

Emery—thanks for your email below, hope below helps.

Also: <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/gold-king-mine-release-emergency-response>

Rich Mylott

USEPA Region 8

303-312-6654

Aerial and ground reconnaissance indicates that the plume associated with the Gold King Mine release has dissipated downstream and there is no leading edge of contamination visible in downstream sections of the San Juan River or Lake Powell. Ultimately, the water quality data we are collecting will define the plume.

EPA is collecting and assessing water quality from the Animas and San Juan Rivers daily. EPA has compared surface water quality data collected on August 5 and 6 to screening levels for human health developed by EPA. The screening levels for human incidental ingestion during recreation are based on an exposure duration totaling 60 days, 8 hours/day. The State of Colorado has developed screening levels for agricultural exposure. The screening levels for agricultural exposure are based on an exposure duration totaling 30 days.

Based on the data we have seen so far, EPA and ATSDR do not anticipate adverse health effects from exposure to the metals detected in the river water samples from skin contact or incidental (unintentional) ingestion. Similarly, the risk of adverse effects to livestock that may have been exposed to metals detected in river water samples from ingestion or skin contact is low. It is advisable to avoid areas with orange discoloration in the river water.

Although the pH levels between Cement Creek and Durango have returned to baseline levels washing with soap and water after contact with the river water is a sound public health practice to minimize exposure to the metals and bacteria that may be present in any untreated river water.

Over the next several days, we will be jointly evaluating data and information with partners to determine when access to the Animas River and downstream locations will be restored for activities and uses such as rafting, fishing, irrigation, and drinking water. EPA, tribal, state and local officials are coordinating these decisions based on sampling data, risk screening levels, and other related factors. We do not anticipate any reopening decisions until at least August 17. The timing of these decisions could vary among local, state and tribal governments based on local conditions and by uses. Until notified otherwise, people should continue to abide by existing closures.

**From:** Smith, Paula  
**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2015 8:20 PM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Cc:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa; Jenkins, Laura Flynn  
**Subject:** Fwd: Gold King Mine wastewater and Lake Powell

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Emery Cowan <[ecowan@azdailysun.com](mailto:ecowan@azdailysun.com)>  
**Date:** August 10, 2015 at 12:44:35 PM MDT  
**To:** "[smith.paula@epa.gov](mailto:smith.paula@epa.gov)" <[smith.paula@epa.gov](mailto:smith.paula@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Gold King Mine wastewater and Lake Powell

Hello Paula,

I am a reporter with the Arizona Daily Sun and I'm working on an update about the Gold King Mine wastewater's movement toward Lake Powell and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Can you provide information about where the leading edge of the plume has reached and the speed at which it is moving? I also read that the EPA is releasing a more comprehensive analysis of the contaminated wastewater, its danger to humans and animals and how it is being diluted as it moves downstream. When will that be released? Lastly, can the EPA comment on the precautions issued by Glen Canyon National Recreation Area urging visitors not to drink, swim or recreate on the San Juan River near the recreation area and Lake Powell? My deadline is tonight.

Thanks so much,

Emery Cowan

Environment, health and science reporter

*Arizona Daily Sun*

office: (928) 556-2250

cell: (303) 931-9332

[ecowan@azdailysun.com](mailto:ecowan@azdailysun.com)

@emerycowan